

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE A-1

WASHINGTON STAR (RED LINE)  
22 SEPTEMBER 1978

# HELMS DENIES TESTIMONY ON RUSSIAN

## Ex-CIA Head Disputes Stories on Defector

By Jeremiah O'Leary  
Washington Star Staff Writer

Former CIA Director Richard Helms today went before a House committee to challenge testimony last week about the lengthy confinement and alleged maltreatment by U.S. authorities of a Soviet defector.

Helms, testifying before the House Assassinations Committee, took issue both with John Limond Hart, a CIA representative who testified last week about the defector, and former Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach, who said he was unaware of the episode at the time.

Hart testified last week that the defector, Yuri Nosenko, was kept in solitary confinement for 1,277 days, under intense psychological and physical pressure and, repeatedly questioned by the CIA because a few agency officials believed he still was working for the KGB, the Russian intelligence service.

Helms was asked by Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, chairman of the committee looking into the assassination of President Kennedy, about the truth of Katzenbach's testimony that he was never asked to approve Nosenko's confinement by CIA officials.

Helms said Katzenbach was present at a meeting on April 2, 1964, with David Murphy, head of the Soviet bloc desk at the CIA; CIA general counsel Lawrence Houston; Assistant Attorney General J. Walter Yeagley of the internal security division; William Foley, Yeagley's assistant; and Helms.

"WE MET IN Katzenbach's office to discuss the legal problems of Nosenko's status and the Justice Department officials were asked for an opinion of the scope of the CIA's authority over Nosenko, who was then under parole," Helms testified.

"The Department of Justice said

the CIA was free for action to carry out the terms of the parole. It was our impression we had the authority to hold him. Katzenbach was there. We told him about the Nosenko problem, why it was very serious and asked what we would do if Nosenko got a lawyer.

"We shared our problems about the uncertainty of Nosenko's bona fides with the Justice Department to see if we could get some help."

Reminded that Katzenbach testified yesterday he had no recollection of anyone coming to him for legal advice about the confinement of Nosenko, Helms said it was hard to reconcile. And he presented a memo from Houston written on April 3, 1964, which described the meeting.

The memo, according to Helms, quotes Foley as saying the CIA could take any action it chose to carry out the parole terms.

STOKES SAID, "Obviously Mr. Katzenbach's statement couldn't be true then?"

Helms said, "I'm afraid not. Mr. Katzenbach was advised about our recollection of the meeting."

Helms said, however, there was no way Katzenbach could have known how the CIA intended to treat Nosenko and that he didn't think Katzenbach could be held responsible and in all probability was never informed.

According to Hart, the official witness of the CIA last week, Nosenko was confined in solitary under 24-hour guard for 1,277 days, kept on a diet of tea and gruel, not permitted to read and sometimes was questioned for 48 hours at a stretch.

Hart traced the confinement and interrogation of the Soviet defector to CIA fears that he might be a plant of the KGB to mislead the CIA about Soviet connections with Lee Harvey Oswald.

Helms said that in the initial phases of Nosenko's confinement, he was in the custody of the Office of Security at the CIA. Subsequently, Helms said, the responsibility was transferred to the office in charge of Soviet Russian affairs.

"I WAS PUZZLED by some of Hart's testimony," Helms told the committee. "He seemed to go into lurid detail about Nosenko's confinement, but had nothing to contribute about Oswald."

"It was almost as if his purpose was to excoriate some of his former colleagues. I never heard of the memos Hart described in which someone wrote of liquidating Nosenko. I never considered it and there was never any consideration given to these lurid solutions."

"I believe in 1967 I decided the case could not go on in this fashion and Nosenko was turned over to a security officer to try to solve the problem. I asked Adm. Rufus Taylor, my deputy, to look into the case and he recommended a different approach. We decided to see if a more solicitous and favorable approach might solve the problem of his bona fides."

"From 1964 to 1967 he was held under spartan conditions. But later he was under as comfortable a confinement and lived as well as anyone in this room."

HELMS SAID OTHER PEOPLE in the intelligence community had access to Nosenko as well as the CIA. He said he regretted that the FBI told the Warren Commission that the FBI knew of Nosenko's background and accepted his statements that the KGB never took any interest in Oswald when the ex-Marine assassin of the late President John F. Kennedy lived in Russia.

Helms said he made a personal visit to the Warren Commission in order to say the CIA could not vouch for Nosenko and what he was saying. He said there was great difficulty with Nosenko because he was a very heavy drinker and at first didn't want to do anything but drink.

"There was an incident in Baltimore when Nosenko punched up a bar and we had to get him away from the booze," Helms said.

CONTINUED

STAT